

taken by counties, and not by districts; and that therefore the number in each district could not be ascertained without the expense of a State census. That objection does not exist now, for now, as the recent census returns on our desks prove, they are taken by election districts separately, as well as by the aggregate in the several counties.

What Mr. Gaston desired should be effected in Congress, has been realized—that members should be elected by single districts. He [Mr. J.] was in Congress at the time, and advocated the plan, and he well remembered that there were as many alarm speeches made there then, as have been made in this Convention, and as much evil to the nation threatened, as mischief to this State, if a change were made. It had been made and approved by the good sense and rational judgment of every good citizen in the nation; and if any member were now to offer to repeal the law, he did not believe that he could get a hearing for a speech, or a dozen votes for it.

But, the young, the populous and growing State of Ohio, has recently (as he learned by the newspapers,) engrafted this feature of single district representation upon its Constitution. And he doubted not, that sooner or later, almost every State in the Union would follow that republican, that judicious, that wise plan. The district system would greatly weaken the political strength of the large counties, and the city of Baltimore; but as the principle was just and republican, he advocated it, although he represented the most populous county in the State. He believed that it would be agreeable to the people of that county, and of all the counties. Not one voter in twenty, in his county, ever saw all the delegates that they voted for, and most of them had never heard of their names until nominated by some central caucus, of which they were not members; and they were forced to vote for whomever their few active party leaders selected.

The plan would bring the representative and the electors into intimate relation, and it would increase responsibility and usefulness of the delegate, as the eye of his constituency would rest upon him, and detect incompetency or neglect of duty. It would, in a word, make all the counties virtually small counties, and would secure a fair representation from all the local interests of the great and growing city of Baltimore. Upon the basis of representation, he would like to see some principle laid down and made uniform throughout, in the Senate and House of Delegates. In the Senate, the smallest county stands equal with the largest; in the House of Delegates, the difference is very slight.

If you will reject the white basis, then will you agree to the mixed federal basis? If you reject that, will you be governed by the value of the property in each county as a standard of representation—the amount of taxes paid into the Treasury from each county? He wanted some settled basis, and not arbitrary caprice and whim. Every State in the Union has some principle laid down upon which their House of Delegates is

based. Maryland alone here is mongrel-hybrid, in relation to this subj. et. He would not go into the statistics on this subject, to show the disparity of the States in population, in wealth, in taxation, in representation; that has been, and doubtless would again be shown.

He knew no advantage in repeating what others had said. It would be but to turn the prism without increasing the primitive colors, and but make a prismatic display to amuse the attention without enlightening the judgment.

He would make a passing remark to repeated allusions made on this floor in regard to the feelings of his section of the State in relation to slavery:

Gentlemen assert, that if the western section has its just political weight, it may endanger the slave property of the State. This Convention, by a unanimous vote, had passed the most stringent section on that subject ever passed by any State in the Union; and, as a slaveholder, he was free to say, it was stronger than met his judgment; he would have preferred the clause in the Missouri Constitution.

In the west we are not as noisy on that subject as some of the small peninsular counties on the Eastern and Western shore of the Chesapeake, because we live too near to the Pennsylvania line to be all the time preaching political sermons on that subject. Our negroes run away—yours do not. You can talk like South Carolina, because you are not harmed, and scold your slaveholding brethren and make as much political capital as you can, and persuade your people to believe, what I very much doubt whether you do yourselves believe, that your negroes are in danger from the Western counties. It is a good subject for anatomy, with a fanciful imagination, and I have listened to several impassioned appeals and vehement declamations.

He was willing to vote for some equitable compromise for the present, in hopes that Conventions, hereafter, would do equal justice to all parts of the State. The small counties might rest assured, if this Convention failed to realise much of the wishes of the great majority of the people, that it would not be long before there would be another Convention.

The people now elect their Governor, and he has enormous patronage. Both the Whig and Democratic candidates in the last contest avowed themselves radical reformers, and were sustained by their parties. If no reform takes place before the next gubernatorial election, I will venture a prediction that no candidate will be elected who will not only avow himself a radical reformer, but who will not pledge himself publicly not to place in any office within his gift any man who is not a radical reformer.

But, he trusted that the moderation and good judgment of this Convention might agree upon some rational basis of adjustment which would meet with the approbation of a majority of its members and a majority of electors of the State at the ballot-box in June.